

**Compliments of the
Season, 1909-10**

FROM
**DR. AND MRS. BRYCE
KILMADOCK (189 COLONY ST.)
WINNIPEG**



KILMADOCK IN NOVEMBER

A Poet's Message

BEING A DISCOURSE GIVEN

BY

Rev. George Bryce, D.D., LL.D., Etc.

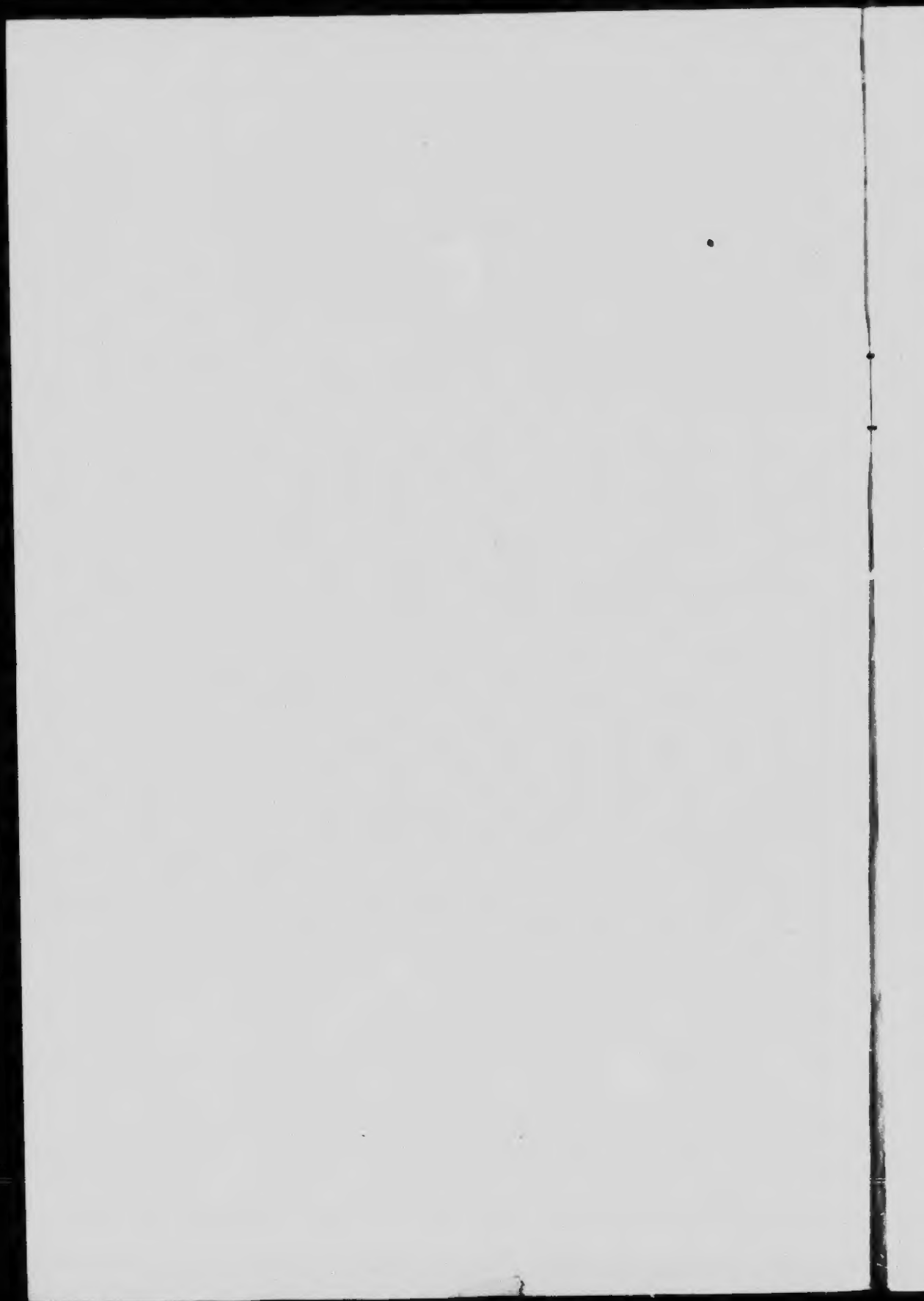
President of the Royal Society of Canada

DURING THE VISIT OF

The British Association for the Advancement of Science

**DELIVERED ON SUNDAY, AUGUST 29TH, 1909, IN KNOX CHURCH
WINNIPEG**

A POET'S MESSAGE



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PSALM XIX

SCIENCE as well as religion has had its martyrs.

The right to think freely has been at times denied in both cases. Notwithstanding all such persecutions the world's unbiassed judgment is against mental or spiritual tyranny, and demands for man in the end the right to think for himself.

The savants in Athens contemptuously styled Paul a babbler, and the pundits of Bohemia burnt Huss at the stake, but humanity canonized them and has declared them both to be "blessed martyrs."

The world, however, still needs to learn the lesson that "truth is one and undivided."

A good-hearted ecclesiastical dignitary said to Galileo, the great Florentine scientist, "Write freely," speaking of his scientific discussions, "Write freely, but keep outside the sacristy," as if true Science and true Theology could do other than agree.

"Young men," said Sir Daniel Wilson, President of Toronto University, to his students,

"you must be free to investigate. You are bound to regard the truth of the Bible"—for Sir Daniel was an active Christian man—"but in Science," and he was speaking of ethnology, "you must be equally free to reach independent conclusions."

Two martyrs for their opinions, though of very different types, Galileo and Milton, met at Arcetri in Italy, in 1688. Milton admired Galileo, of whom he speaks in "Paradise Lost:"

*"Through optic glass the Tuscan artist views
At even from the top of Fesole,"*

Fesole being the mountain of Florence known to both of them.

Christian poet and daring scientist looked up the valley of the Arno and gazed upon the thick leaves of Vallombrosa, which betokened the shadows which were to fall upon both their lives, and they were both willing to suffer for truth's sake.

Standing in beautiful Florence, among such historic memories of freedom, a parable comes to our mind:—

As all roads lead to Rome, you may if you wish to reach Rome from Florence, on the one hand, take the railway up the beautiful Arno, make the journey leading along the heights of the Apennines, pass by famous Trasimene, and so reach the Eternal City.

But should you desire otherwise, you may

go down the Arno, and then follow the line of communication along the Mediterranean to Rome.

Two different roads may thus reach the same trysting place.

The faith for which Milton endured, as seen in the subjective picture of himself in *Samson Agonistes*, and the Science for which Galileo was condemned to repeat the seven penitential psalms every day for three years, were each leading on in their own way to the Citadel of Truth.

The poem before us, the XIX Psalm, is one taken from the collection of Hebrew literature bearing the name of King David, on account of his being the greatest poet of his nation, and he stands out as one of the greatest lyric poets of any literature.

It, like the VIII Psalm of the same writer, begins as a nature-poem and changes before it ends into a perfect lyric. It is strikingly Davidic. Closely examined it is seen to be divided into three strophes, and it may be worth while to consider the leading thought of each.

I. *Verses 1-6.*—The leading thought of the poet is; "The heavens declare the glory of God. The statement is made that day and night teach us: but also that there is no vocable communication: their voice cannot be heard. Poet and scientist may catch the message—one by taking the road along the heights, the other along the

level of the seashore—that whether it be in Science or religion the secret for any one can only be known by seeking diligently until he find it. Industrious research is the price we always have to pay for advancement. Toilsome, wearisome nights of study, and continuous, self-denying cultivation of spirit can alone open the deep things of nature—whether it be in the realm of matter or of mind.

The heavens are telling: day and night give us knowledge; the sun like a bridegroom appears in his strength—the sun like a strong man to run a race—the glorious orb of day, which Byron calls, “the earliest minister of the Almighty.”

Poet after poet of our nation all declare the same, but no one better than Coleridge, who is after all the keenest-eyed of our poets. He says, speaking of the silent voice in his poem on the “Sunrise on Mont Blanc:”

“ Motionless torrents ! Silent cataracts !
Who made you glorious as the gates of heaven
Benesth the keen full moon ? Who bade the sun
Clothe you with rainbows ? Who, with living flowers
Of loveliest hue, spread garlands at your feet ?
God ! let the torrents, like a shout of nations
Answer ! and let the ice-plains echo—God !
God ! Sing ye meadow streams with gladsome voice !
Ye pine groves, with your soft and soul-like sounds !
And they too have a voice, yon piles of snow,
And in their perilous fall shall thunder, God ! ”

The sacred poet, whose words we are considering, completes his weighty statement by saying of the

sun, "There is nothing hid from the heat thereof." Says a scientist: "To the sun we can trace directly nearly all the energy involved in all phenomena—mechanical, chemical or vital. Cut off his rays for even a single month and the earth would die: all life upon its surface would cease." Every laboratory, every scientific instrument, every telegraph wire, every telephone, every telescope, every Marconi station, every microscope, every spectroscope, every polariscope is showing the power and the effect of sunlight, and we instinctively, as scientists are compelled, to break forth with the sacred poet, in the same way as did our distinguished President, Sir J. J. Thompson, after detailing to us the wonders of ether, electricity, and the formation of matter, in his closing sentence, "How great are thy works, Oh Lord!"

Shallow men unfortunately have the most to say as controversialists in the debatable questions of Science and Theology. Less than twenty years ago a literary man wrote a book entitled, "The Bankruptcy of Science," attempting to show that everything essential and possible to be discovered by Science was already known. How completely the last fifteen years have answered this literary pessimist! Immediately after the words were uttered Sir William Crooks used with wonderful effect the vacuum tube as a revealer of the phenomena of electricity and matter. Then Hertz discovered the electro-magnetic waves as

a penetrating power and Lenard supported him. Next came the making known of the Röntgen or X rays, with their remarkable and beneficial powers; Musson adapted electricity to be a marvellous melting power in the electric furnace. Then there was, through the work of Lord Raleigh and Sir William Ramsay, the discovery of helium and its four new companion elements, and Dewar succeeded in liquefying hydrogen—the most elusive of substances. The discovery by Becquerel of the radio-activity of uranium, and the finding of radium by the Curies, as well as the work of Professor Rutherford, who is with us, these and others make up a splendid coruscation of human genius. Instead of saying that “Science is bankrupt,” we shall exclaim as we see yet only the fringe of the garment of the Eternal God, “How great and marvellous are the goings of the Almighty!

When Herbert Spencer in his “First Principles” declares our human beliefs to be modes of manifestation of “The Unknowable,” he is not far from using the words of St. Paul, in regard to the Author of this world of wonders: “His ways are past finding out.”

II. In *Verses 7-11* we have the second strophe of the poem.

God's perfect law strengthens man's soul, rejoices the heart and opens the eyes of the understanding.

Science as well as Religion has to do with man's mental and moral nature. Two of Darwin's portly volumes deal with the "Emotions of Man and Animals." The President of the Anthropological Section, Dr. Myres, includes these human characteristics within his Science. Poet, philosopher and savage, in all nations, have been shown to be made what they are by their beliefs. The abnormal absence of any sense of the Supreme is found to produce the criminal, dangerous to his fellowman and dangerous to himself as well. Wisdom, gladness, mental and spiritual repose, reverence, and a sense of equity and justice are all established, strengthened and confirmed in our minds by the belief and confidence in a Supreme One, who is pure and just and true.

The sacred poet who wrote these words makes use of the strongest figures of speech within his reach. He is lifted up to the highest condition of feeling. The contemplation of these highest laws raises the poet to a state of ecstasy. They are, he says, "more to be desired than gold, yea, than much fine gold : sweeter also than honey and the honey-comb."

Do you object to ecstasy ! to a rapt condition of mind ! to an overmastering enthousiasm in religion ! I do not. If it be true and real it is beautiful. I delight to see a man in earnest both in Science and Religion.

You do not object to Coleridge's poetic

ecstasy. You do not find fault with Wordsworth for his inspiration when he says:

"And oh ye fountains, meadows, hills and groves,
Think not of any severing of our loves."

Why should we object to the lofty aspirations of David, or to Isaiah's wild seraphic fire, or to the glorious visions of Ezekiel, or the religious enthusiasm of Whitfield or Moody! We believe that God has influenced the minds of the choice spirits of the ages both in Religion and Science to give this message to the world. Only the pure in heart can see God. Only such as see His truth can be the world's great teachers, and can show forth His law and His precepts. On us He lays His law.

Brethren of Science you believe in the prevalence of law. A former President of the British Association, the Duke of Argyle, has written learnedly on the "Reign of Law."

If I believe in a God who is lofty and unfathomable in His counsels, as Herbert Spencer makes the Great First Cause to be—full of majesty, strength and intelligence, then I cannot think of His making a world without accuracy of thought and intention. God's law is inevitable. What we call a miracle is but the intervention of a higher law with which we were not previously acquainted. Thus, seeing in the world that violation of God's law brings sorrow and pain, and obedience to the law brings happiness,

I cannot wonder at the poet exclaiming, "In keeping of His precepts there is a great reward."

When, moreover, I see Him, who trod the plains and hills of Galilee, obeying in every particular this law, and by His example and power assisting every like-minded one to do so, I break out in new fervor, declaring, "In keeping of His precepts there is a great reward."

And now (III) remains the lyric strophe *Verses 12-14*. — Contemplation of the Divine greatness and of man's weakness makes it a personal matter for the poet. He knows that "to err is human," but in such light he is dazzled and exclaims, "Who can understand His errors?"

These include (1st) Our unintentional faults, (2nd) Our deliberate or presumptuous errors. A man's overwhelming sense of his own weaknesses and short-comings throws him back on God's help—throws him back on the God-Man sufferer, who has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows, who alone can shed upon our troubled spirits His sweet gift of peace.

Further, it is the mission of religion to follow the spirit of its Master, to cultivate the gentle and considerate disposition—to carry out the golden rule—to put into practice the requirements of the Sermon on the Mount, "Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called the children of God."

Christianity has made the gentleman.

"In lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than themselves."

"Look not every man on his own things, but every man on the things of others."

"Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus."

And true Science also cultivates the same virtues.

With what patience the investigator into the problems of light adjusts his apparatus and spends weary days and even weeks in an experiment; how the analyst deals with every change of conditions in his work, and allows for miscalculations and errors; how the medical man studies with care his patient's case and adapts his methods to it.

If there is any one trained to faithfulness, care and patience it is the honest investigator.

How solicitous the true scientist is for truth, how careful he must be in his logic and generalizations; how firmly he must stand against petulance, or revenge or recrimination towards those who unjustly oppose his conclusions or throw aspersions on his work or his motives.

The great scientists who have left us during the past generation were constant object-lessons to us of truthfulness, gentleness and high character.

Less than thirty years ago there passed away the man, the centenary of whose birth the world

has this year been celebrating—Charles Darwin. His interesting life and letters tell us how, losing his mother as a little child, he was thrown upon himself and upon the companionship of his father whom he admired and who induced him to study for several years for the church. He was at college the companion of men older than himself, so that we are told “an intense modesty and simplicity marked Charles Darwin’s whole nature.”

Darwin says of himself: “I do not mean to say that a favorable review or a large sale of my books did not please me greatly, but the pleasure was a fleeting one, and I am sure that I have never turned one inch out of my course to gain fame.”

In the very last year of his life he said: “As for myself I believe that I have acted rightly in steadily following and devoting my life to science. I feel no remorse for having committed any great sin [in changing his course], but have often and often regretted that I have not done more good to my fellow creatures.”

Another gentle and devout product of true science and deepest religion was James Clerk Maxwell, who passed away three years after the death of Darwin. A Scottish gentleman—Clerk Maxwell became Cavendish Professor of Physics in Cambridge, thus being a predecessor of Sir J. J. Thomson, our President of the British Association. Clerk Maxwell’s brilliant theories

have led to the present activity in the study of the constitution of matter. His biographers say that "the leading note of Clerk Maxwell's character was a grand simplicity. Extraordinary gentleness was combined with keen penetration, wonderful activity with a no less wonderful repose, personal humility and modesty with intellectual scorn. . . . His tenderness for all living things was deep and instinctive; from earliest childhood he could not hurt a fly."

Maxwell said: "I have looked into most philosophical systems and I have seen that none will work without a God."

Another has said of him: "His liberality, in every sense of the word, was absolute."

Again, five years ago, there died in England, a scientist of note who was born in Canada, but who spent his life in the Mother Country, Mr. George J. Romanes. He was a most thorough evolutionist—was further, what many evolutionists are not, an unbeliever for a time in the Christian Revelation, and was indeed a hot controversialist on the subject. Canon Gore, now Bishop of Birmingham, says of him: "He was a scientific man who was not only remarkably able and clear-headed, but also many-sided, as few are, in his capacities, and singularly candid and open-hearted." This is a beautiful character.

Bishop Gore in publishing a small portion of the literary remains of this remarkable man, says in conclusion that Romanes "returned before his

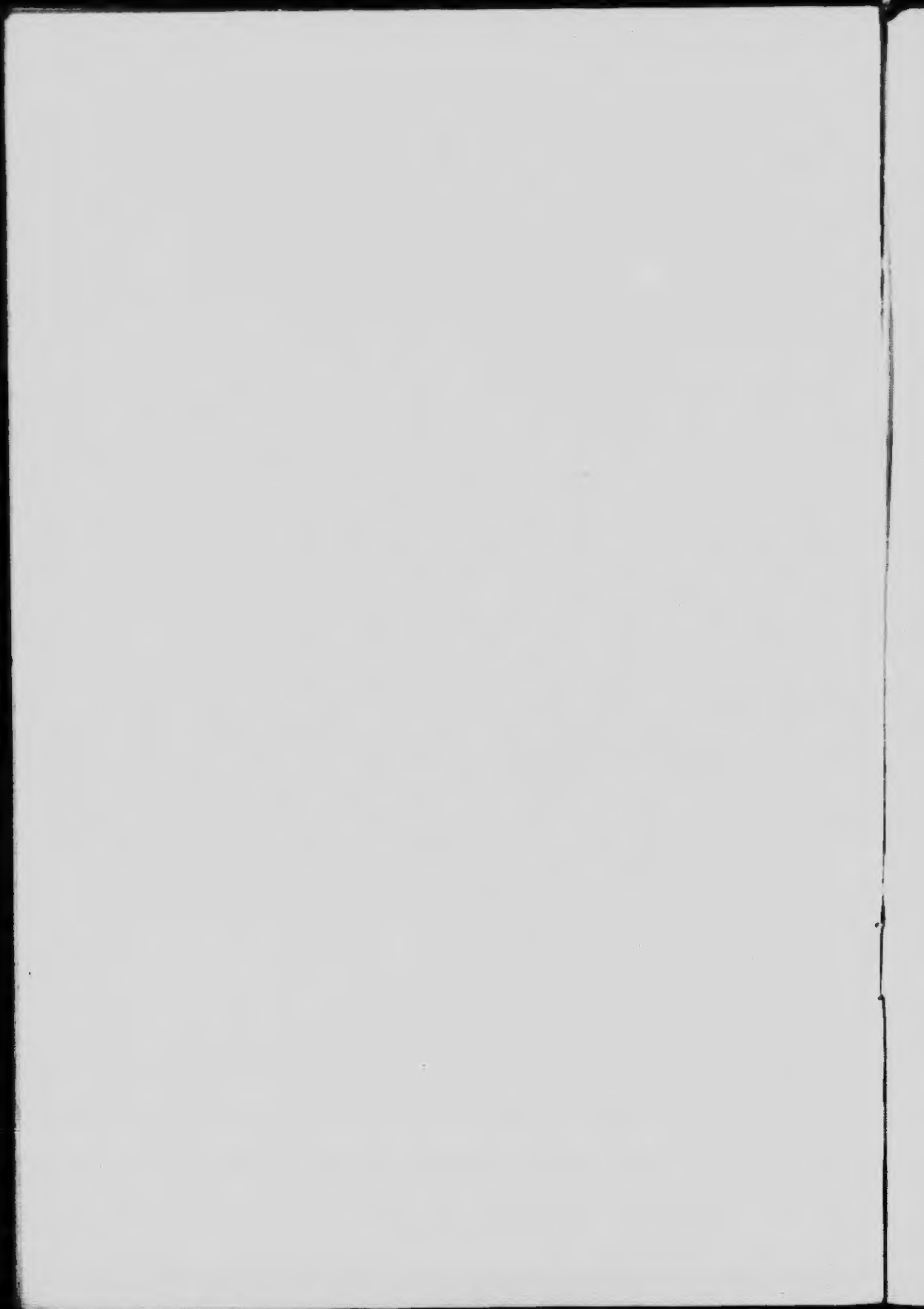
death to that full deliberate communion with the Church of Jesus Christ, which he had for so many years been conscientiously compelled to forego. In his case one "pure in heart" was, after a long period of darkness, allowed, in a measure, before his death, to "see God."

"The Heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament sheweth His handywork."

"The law of the Lord is perfect converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure making wise the simple."

"Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Thy sight, oh Lord, my Strength and my Redeemer."

AMEN.



MORE IMPORTANT Works of Dr. BRYCE,

Of the University of Manitoba and Marquette College,
Winnipeg

Author of articles "Manitoba" and "Winnipeg" in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*; of "Canada" in Winsor's *Narrative and Critical History of America*; of "The Indians" and "Education in Manitoba" in the *Canadian Encyclopedia*; and of articles in the *Encyclopædia Americana*, *Standard Encyclopedia*, &c.

1. MANITOBA: INFANCY, GROWTH, &c.
Sampson Low & Co., London
2. A SHORT HISTORY OF THE CANADIAN PEOPLE
Sampson Low & Co., London
3. OUR CANADIAN PRAIRIES.....C. B. Robinson, Toronto
4. AMONG THE MOUND BUILDERS' REMAINS.....Winnipeg
5. PLANTS OF MANITOBA (PLATES).....Marcus Ward, Belfast
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